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PROBUS

TO

PHILARETES:

A FAMILIAR

*Miscellaneous* EPISTLE.



PROBUS

TO

PHILADELPHIA



A FAMILIAR

MISCELLANEOUS EPISTLES

PROBUS /  
TO  
PHILARETES:

A FAMILIAR

*Miscellaneous* EPISTLE.

Occasioned by some *Late Occurrences*.

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—*Facit Indignatio*—

P E R S.

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L O N D O N:

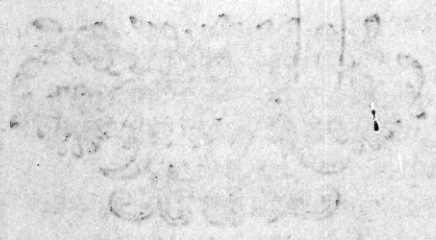
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P R O B L E M

TO

M R S JAMES

AT THE  
M R S JAMES





# PROBUS

T O

## PHILARETES.

*My Dear Friend,*



O U R Company at present would be as useful as agreeable to me; for I could freely communicate my Mind to you, and presently know your Sentiments. There are Occurrences that cannot but lead one into Variety of Thoughts, and on Subjects of great Concern to an honest Man. Since by your Absence I cannot speak, I must write to you. But one Hour's Conversation would carry us further than several Hours Writing.

Yet Familiar Letters between Friends are next to Conversation. He who writes to the Publick, like one dancing in a publick Assembly, must be under a Thousand Constraints, which would be as useless and impertinent Embarrassments in writing to his intimate Friend, as the *Minuet-Step*, or the *Walk of a Courant* would be in walking alone to make his Friend a Visit. He has nothing to mind but the Road, and to walk it so as best suits his Journey; and is not encumber'd about his Steps and Gate, only that he may not tread awry. And he walks better in a Frock, Bob, and strong easy Shoes, than in Top-Dress and a Pair of nice single Pumps.

I now write to you, Dear Sir, with no Concern on me about Style or Method, and the Beauties and *Delicacies* of the Pen. I only want to let you know the Thoughts that revolve in my Breast; and it matters not whether in my own Words, or the Words of others, and whether the Sentiments have first arisen to my self, or I have learn'd them from Books or Conversation; for both of them, *as they are in my Mind*, are my own *Thoughts*, and have equal Influence on me. And this Influence can scarcely miss to appear from my Expressions, which will be *these* that my Thoughts naturally suggest to me; and therefore may sometimes be in the grave and serious, and sometimes in the jocular and ludicrous Strain; sometimes full of Regret or Indignation, and sometimes of Contempt and Disdain. Don't you often find these succeed one another, and take very quick Turns in your Soul, when employ'd on important affecting Subjects? But in writing to you, I need not bind my self down to the Free and Familiar way, no more than to the Methodical. Even in this also I'll be unconfin'd; for affected Freedom is the most hateful and ridiculous of all Constraints. And if my Mind shall prompt me to it (which I believe it will not) I'll walk in my pretty Pumps with a Tye-Perriwig, and lay aside my Bob and strong Shoes.

Honesty in Distress, and prosperous Wickedness, have in all Ages and Countries exercis'd the anxious Thoughts of Mankind. One of 30 or 40 Years of Age can hardly have liv'd so retir'd from the World, as not to have seen Instances of it; for they occur not only in publick, but also in private Life.

Many Years ago I read a little *French* Book, call'd, *L' Honête Homme & le Scelerat*, and wrote by a *Scelerat*; for he moves you by representing the *Honête Homme*, in all the Scenes of Life, distress'd, undone, and never reliev'd by his Vertue; and the Rascal in the same Course of Affairs flourishing by his Dishonesty, and brought out of all Difficulties: And thus preparing you, his Principle of sordid Selfishness does more readily insinuate itself into your Heart, and insensibly, like flow, but sure Poison, corrupts the Blood and Vitals, and reduces the sound Man to a rotten Carcass that stinks above Ground.

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I was young when I read it, and the bare-fac'd Villainy of the Author astonish'd me. And I was more astonish'd, that an Old Man of Quality, finding the Book in my Hand, recommended it earnestly to me as a good Director of my Conduct, when I should come to enter on the World. After this Recommendation, and the same Person's arguing with me, "That he was not bound to "act for his Country to the Hurt of his own Fortune," I ever disdain'd the old Rogue, and was struck with deep Concern and Amazement, that such a Knave had been trusted in Government and Publick Business! And I could not recover from the Fit of Indignation, mix'd with Dejection of Spirit, that it threw me into, till I consider'd that with all his Perfidiousness he had been as unsuccessful as the *Honête Homme* whose Example he endeavour'd to dissuade me from following. Thus some Rogues are damn'd here and hereafter!

I was then ignorant of the World, and knew not Mankind. I us'd to entertain my self delightfully with the bright Examples of Virtue in Ancient History, and with the generous Maxims of Persons celebrated in all Ages; and finding their Praise in every Mouth, I fancy'd, that tho' I saw many were gluttonous, lewd, covetous, drunken, vain, &c. and tho' the Bent of Human Nature was to indulge Pleasure and even Sensuality, and had carry'd Men otherwise deservedly famous into great and shameful Excesses; yet I could not imagine that any but the Dross of the Earth, the Dregs of Mankind, and the cover'd Villains who artfully dissemble and insinuate themselves into Power, did not approve of Generosity, and the gallant Sentiments and Actions of a Man of Honour and Publick Spirit. I fancy'd, that a Man of Honour, in any Station of Life, acting on noble Principles, would be supported by the Generality of Mankind, and valu'd for his Worth by those in Authority, and might easily condemn the Resentment of Rogues; "to disappoint whom, and defeat their Designs and Practices, cannot but be the "strong Inclination and Endeavour of an honest Man, "and a great Satisfaction to him; and it is most certainly his Duty.

I then thought it the sure Way to defeat a Knave, to convince the World that he was a Knave; and I continu'd

tinu'd long of this Opinion, in spite of many Instances of the contrary that surpriz'd and griev'd me; because I still saw that Men, however prosperous and powerful Rogues, were both in common and private Conversations condemn'd and reproach'd for their Knavery; that this was the favourite Topick of their Enemies, and a foul Imputation that their Friends endeavour'd to wipe off.

But tho' this does, in some measure, hold true to this Day, yet how greatly was I still mistaken! Not in my Sentiments of Virtue, Honour, Generosity, and Publick Spirit; for these are as certainly right, as it is certain that we are Men, that Society is to be maintain'd, and that there is an Infinite, Righteous, and Holy God, who made and rules all things. But I find that I was grievously mistaken as to Mankind. I was not sufficiently sensible of the Extent and Inveteracy of Human Depravity. And if I had not corrected this Mistake, how vastly more must I have been mistaken now? For he must be very young or unattentive, or a great Stranger to *Britain*, who perceives not, that Baseness of Spirit, Viciousness, and curst Corruption, has for many Years past gone on, and still advances, by large and swift Strides, and is arriv'd to a Height beyond what it was at in former Days.

In saying this, I do not neglect the good Counsel of the Man distinguish'd by his Wisdom, and all whose Writings, that we have, proceeded from the Omniscient and Unerring Spirit of Wisdom and Truth. *Say not thou what is the Cause, that the former Days were better than these: for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.* The Caution is certainly necessary; for we are very ready to err in preferring former Times to the present.

We have not full Knowledge of the Days before our own, and the Particulars are mostly hid from us in Clouds of Darkness undispellable; and the Events of those Days do not personally concern the greatest Part of us, nor employ our Hopes or Fears. We may likewise as readily misjudge of the past Times of our own Days, as being turn'd old, we are ready to fancy, that the Ladies were then more pretty, and the Seasons warmer than now. In Youth, we are full of Enjoyments,

ments, and fuller of Hopes; and Trifles, *Nothing's*, delight the exulting Heart, and lead it on from Deceptions to Disappointments; and even the Paths of future Sorrow seem to be strew'd with Roses, and are trod with present Pleasure. We saw not then sufficiently the Evil of the Times. We had small Knowledge and Experience of Affairs: And vain Enjoyments and vainer Hopes veil'd our Eyes, and the Exuberancy of Natural Spirits supported us in the Joy of almost continual Delusion.

My Dear Friend, you are fully ——— but my Letter may be open'd at the Post-House, and carry'd to Sir ———; therefore since I cannot whisper it in your Ear, I will not mention ——— the Year of your Age. But you and I are old enough to *feel* the *Contrast*, and we need not tell to one another how different the Case (if not of *Old*, yet) of *more advanced* Age is. And I believe both of us are sensible, that the Infirmities attending advanc'd Age, as well as the Weaknesses and ignorant unexperienced Follies of Youth, tend to betray Men into Mistakes about the Times.

Bnt the needful Caution given us in the Sacred Text I have quoted, does not contain nor imply a universal Prohibition. This were to prohibit us to see or think. It never was wrong to say, that *Solomon's* early Days, when full of the Spirit of God, and justly admir'd for his Wisdom and Administration, were better than the After-days in which he forgot God, and join'd himself to Idols and Devils. The Holy Writings frequently speak of ——— a people's Cup of *Iniquity* being *full* or not yet *fill'd up*. And in *these* we see succeeding Reigns and Administrations compar'd with former, and, according to their Deservings, declar'd to be better or worse. And the Causes of the Miscarriages of Kings and Rulers, and thereby of the superior Wickedness of the Age, are often expressly remarked. And it is impossible that this Advice can be taken so largely; for then it would not be the Advice of an inspir'd Prophet agreeable to the rest of the Scriptures of Truth, but of an unjust Monarch, who knows that Ignorance is the Mother of that Devotion he desires to be ador'd with by his unhappy People; or of a *haughty, domineering Minister*, who would look on himself as a *Pitiful Fellow*,

low, if he suffer'd the best and greatest of his Fellow-Subjects to speak their Minds, and who hates and dreads *the Liberty of the Press*.

Therefore, without Fear of transgressing against this good Caution, I may write of the Badness of the present Time even beyond former Times, if I can *enquire wisely concerning it*.

Instances of very bad things in our Days will not prove them worse than the former in which the like Instances occur'd. And supposing we had such *now*, yet also—

In those Days, there was a great Lord, who most agreeably surpriz'd the World, by boldly espousing, on an eminent Occasion, and on others, adhering resolutely to the Cause of Honour and his Country. And for it he renounc'd Posts of Dignity, that were also so profitable as not to be despis'd by the Richest. Yet, in a few Years, like the Cat turn'd to a Woman (for it never turn'd a Man) he made a sudden Jump from his Honourable new Friends to catch a Mouse, tho' he wallow'd in native Plenty.

And, in those Days, there was another Great Lord, Young, favourably look'd on by all, frank and obliging in his Deportment, profuse rather than sordid, in Possession of a very good and in the sure and not very distant Expectancy of a vast Estate, who had a near Relation that could and probably would enrich him beyond any Subject; and who had the Favour of the Person of highest Expectation in the Realm. What could tempt such a Lord, *in two or three Days*, to desert the Cause of Honour and of his Country, and to behave unw—ly to his Relation and Great Friend? to forfeit his Reputation during a long Course of Years he might live, and which might have been adorn'd with Virtue and Glory, as well as pass'd in the greatest Opulency and Grandeur? One would think that Madness could only account for it. I am of that Opinion. But Madness is of diverse Kinds; and none of them are more misleading than mistaken ill-judg'd Vanity.

Could there be a more manifest Instance of it, than to do an unhandson thing in (the very distant and uncertain) Hopes of one Day rising, through a mean Post, to the Military Glory of the Great Name he had *chang'd* to be the Heir of? What could blind him so much? He could  
not

not possibly imagine that the great Name he was call'd by, could raise him to that high Pitch of Renown. Was it then the certain Consciousness of his great Genius and Capacity for War, and an irresistible Ardor to be in the way of Exerting it? Ah! — And strong must the Impulse have been that could bring a Man, so warlike-minded, to digest Injuries very recently receiv'd. But such a one should know, that the Glory of a Man of Honour must accompany the Renown of a Great Commander; or the Commander, in all his Greatness, will justly be despis'd or hated.

A Great and Successful General as well as a Great and Successful Lawyer, or Statesman, may be a most execrable R——l. And alas! a great Lord may be a great K——ve or a great F——l at the Head of a Regiment, and never come to be a great General.

Let me look back to those Times a little earlier than I intended, and try what Light we may get into this L——d's most wonderful Behaviour.

In those Days it was the Fashion to keep up a much larger Army than was needful for any warlike Occasions of the Nation; but several Gentlemen of the Army fought against the Nation by their Votes in — and more than 100 of them were thrust into — for that most honourable Purpose. In a time of no War (at least of no Fighting) but of long and frequent Parliaments, they were not us'd to Arms for Battle, but for Shew, and were train'd to do Execution with their Tongues, not with their Hands. All of it consisted in the Application of two Monosyllables, *Aye* and *No*. But some of them did learn, with no Letters, to deal, not in Monosyllables only, but Polysyllables, and to join them in Periods, and of these Periods to compose a thing call'd a *Speech*, which they shot now and then from a *Blunderbuss*.

The frequent Use of this Instrument, both in Speech and Action, made a certain Gentleman so remarkable, that, if he had not had a Brother, the Name of it would have been appropriated to himself. But he, trusting to his superior Title to that Honour, and dreadful that his Brother could equal him in it, did frankly allow of his Partnership, and publickly spoke of *the Two Blundering Brothers*; and he most ingeniously demonstrated,

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that

that the dignify'd Name of *Blanderer* was their own in a peculiar manner.

Yet the new-fashion'd Sons of *Mars* did no deadly Execution with this wide-mouth'd Instrument, but they never fail'd to make terrible Havock with their murdering *Stiletto* and Pocket-Pistol, *Aye* and *No*. The Nature of the *Blunderbuss* was, like a certain famous Wind-Engine, to make some Noise, and to smell most odiously. The Sound of the Instrument sometimes excited Laughter, and at other times was exceeding soporiferous; but the lethargick Operation was often stopp'd by the Emetical Quality of the Smell: And it had no other Effect; except that, on occasions, it serv'd to protract Time, and keep off a close Engagement, till the moroding Mercenary Troops were brought up to fall on. But the Military were so dexterous in the Use of their little Dagger and Pistol, that they never miscarry'd in the Stob of the one, nor ever miss'd their Aim in firing the other. And if any of them struck or aim'd, not according to Command, he was speedily turn'd out of the Army.

It was not so in the warlike Reign of a former King, celebrated for his sedate Understanding, Penetration into the Hearts of Men and never or seldom mistaking what he might expect from them, for his working Head, firm Resolution, and Intrepidity, both in the Cabinet and in the Field. He had govern'd a free People, and had been bred among them, and did not imagine that a brave Officer fail'd in the Military Obedience of the Camp, if he was not slavishly obedient in Council. He never could be perswaded by his Ministers, for what they call'd Errors of the Tongue, to wrest those Arms out of the Hands of Gallant Men, which he had often beheld them use so faithfully and boldly in his Service. He had partaken of their Toils and Dangers, and was foremost in them; and his Great Soul was incapable of the mean Fears and Resentments of any Ministry that trembled in Apprehension of Parliamentary Enquiries. Such a King fights to subdue the Enemies of the Nation; and the Ministry to subdue the Nation it self; and therefore to subdue the Parliament, which like an impregnable Fort, cannot be taken but by the Treachery of the Garrison. And thence come the Pensions, Places, Cajoleries, Promises, &c. so plentifully bestow'd on the most Part,  
(and

(and the *most Part* must be the *Majority*) and the Frowns, Menaces, and Injuries daily bestow'd with great Liberality on others. Such Men are Ministers very often; and such a Man very seldom is a King.

This *truly Great Man* (a Name more honourable, and more rarely deserv'd than *Great King*) did himself reign and govern; and his *Ministers* were no other than the Word literally imports — *Servants*. In other times, it has by a strange Perversion come to signify quite the contrary — *Masters*.

This just and honourable Usage of brave Warriours continu'd in a subsequent Reign of Action and Military Glory, till towards the End of it. Then Troops being recall'd from the Field, and Navies from the Main, *the War of Tongue and Trick* was too much encourag'd and carry'd on; and Soldiers were turn'd out of the Employments wherein they had gallantly signaliz'd their Fidelity, Conduct, and Courage, for not being duly train'd in the Exercise of those dreadful Weapons, *Aye and No*.

This rais'd a Cry so loud, that all the Island resounded it, as a bare-fac'd Attempt to render Parliaments the Tools of introducing that Arbitrary Despotick Power, which their Institution and End is to keep out. And none was more deep-mouth'd in the Cry, than he who not long afterwards began to creep into Power, if not Sovereign, yet uncontrolled. But having arrived at it, he not only on *like*, but *much less*, *Occasions* did the same thing.

For the Offence of being thus firmly vertuous, he turn'd out of the Army that very Person, for whose being used so formerly he had join'd in the loud and just Complaint of the Nation: That Noble Person of undisputed Sense and Honour, fine Taste and Wit, easy attracting Good nature and Elegancy, and Military Skill and Bravery. He would not submit to the Slavery of a *pretended Whig*, no more than of a *pretended Tory* Administration, nor assist to give up the National Rights and Liberties to a K——g, no more than to a P——r; and therefore was used alike by both Ministries.

But I believe I write unacurately, in calling the last a Ministry. No; there was not then a *Ministry*, but a *Minister* — a *Master* — surrounded by Slaves dignify'd

with idle Names of Officers that once had been, but no longer were significant.

The Minister, for the same Reason, sacrificed this Noble Person's Gallant Friend to his own scurvy Resentment, for not yielding to him absolute Parliamentary Obedience. A Peer of acknowledged fine Accomplishments, generous, and of eminent Service in Peace and War, and who had in Negotiation, as well as in Battle, supported the Interest and Honour of his Country and King, and disdain'd to deliver up in Parliament, to an insolent rapacious Minister, what he had gallantly defended in the Field against armed Force, and in the Cabinet against the Subtilties of Politicians. Such a Negotiator (so different from——!) and such a Peer in Parliament (alas! that he could be turn'd out of it!) could not be endur'd by such a M——r and his Slaves; and the brave Military Man was therefore drove from the Army.

And that the Sacrifice might be outwardly more pompous, by a Victim of higher Title, a Great D—— was (*in this*) join'd to these two Noble Lords of unquestion'd Worth and Honour.

Nor did the M——r rest here, tho' for some Years this Measure was rather excus'd than vindicated; but being publickly charged with it, and in the most proper Place, he *with unparallel'd Modesty, and no less Wisdom*, boasted of it as an Act of Spirit, that all who succeed to his Place and Power (God forbid that any do!) should exert against the Highest Subjects who shall dare to contradict his Measures. And he very soon prov'd his Sincerity in this Declaration; and finding *no other Colonel who deserv'd the Honour*, he turn'd out a *Cornet*, because he had worthily stood up against him in Parliament, for the just Interest and Dignity of the Highest Subject, whom the Minister thought himself oblig'd to humble and keep low (*God knows what besides!*) since he could not blind him, and obtain his Favour.

I have not yet fallen upon any *Memoirs* of the Fate of the *Illustrious Changeling* I mention'd, after his unexpected Turn; and I thought it would be acceptable to give you Instances from those Times of the Minister's Usage of some other Great Lords, in Military  
Em-

Employment, who refused unlimited Obedience to his unjust Demands and saucy Pleasure. How could this Great Lord expect better? His Quality was not higher than that of one; and Vanity it self could not flatter him to dream, that his Merit exceeded the Worth and Services of either of the other two Examples I have produced. He must therefore have been wholly void of Observation and Reflection; for it would be harsh to say, that he had resolv'd on dirty Compliances, that he might be permitted to sink in the Employment he caught at. But with this my Memoirs have furnish'd me, that, just on his Acceptance, the M———r, in a very publick Manner, made Game of him in a great Horse-laugh, and dull insolent Jokes. You know, that none but his *Illustrious Brother* exceeded him in heavy low Jest, and the perpetual nauseous Affectation of Wit and Humour, which he has no Pretence to. And thus he discover'd alike his Judgment and his Wit, and the Knowledge he had of his own Talents.

But why should I write so severely of the Miscarriages of those Persons?— And why may not I write so to you? My Dear Friend, do not you and I, and all Mankind, speak so of them? And have I not wrote what is true and just? How ridiculous, how absurd, how perverse is it, to be more offended at one who with honest Freedom exposes bare-fac'd Corruption, than at the Corrupters and Corrupted, those Infections, those Curses of human Society? It was said of an Historian, that he publickly wrote and censured the Wickedness of Emperors as freely as they committed it. And may not I, in a private Letter, take as much Liberty with wicked Subjects. God forbid I should approve of discovering secret Wickedness; and Faults of any sort that are hid from the World, shall, for me, in most Cases, be buried in impenetrable Darkness. Nor would I, in most Cases, make manifest the Vices that are only surmised and suspected, but, at least, let them remain doubtful. To detect conceal'd, or doubted Vice, is to encrease ill Examples, the prodigious Number of which that we already have, is too strong Encouragement to the bad; and the *Setting of the Example* is owing not only to the Committer, but to the Discoverer of the un-reveal'd or uncertain Crime. And when the Guilt of  
a Per-

a Person is not known, he continues at least under the Restraint of Shame and Fear of his Reputation, which is taken off by the Discovery; and, for the most Part, Men will then be more apt to harden, than reform.

But this is far from being the Case of bold, open Transgressors. And if those I have pointed at had been publicly chastis'd, when they publicly gave the pestiferous Examples, it might have done good. It might have struck themselves with Remorse, and made them at least wish in their poor rack'd Souls, that they had continued honest and brave. Would to God they would yet return to Honour, if they be yet alive! Since they regarded not the real Shame of deserting it. God forbid they should continue Deserters, from a false Shame of amending. *In the happy Event of their returning to Virtue, what could I not risque for them?* If they will not return, yet open Rebuke would not suffer them to hug themselves in their Dishonour, and to turn utterly abandon'd in Principle, as well as in Practice, and work themselves into an Opinion, that they have done right, or are not strongly disapprov'd of, and with the Tranquillity of a harden'd stupify'd Conscience, to sit down on their ill got scurvy Gains, or servile Pittance of Power.

And if it should have no Effect on them at all, yet it ought to be done for the sake of others. Most People have a more quick Sense of Gain, Power, Ease, and Splendor, than of Honour and Virtue. The first strike the Eye, and without Reflection attract every one's Observation, and the emulous, if not envious, Wishes of the Majority. But Honour and Virtue are only visible to those who are attentive, and think, and reflect. Therefore a Man of Honour *who refuses to be advanc'd dirtily*, walking thro' the Streets of London, or riding into a Country Town or Village, in plain or shabby Dress, and with none, or a very mean Equipage or Attendance; there is no Splendor about him, nothing distinguishing. If he be not jostled and insulted, yet he may be neglected, and bare scanty Civility is the most he meets with. It is quite otherwise with a Rogue in Affluence or Power. What can prevent the Infection he carries about with him, but to let our Countrymen know, *That the shining Fellow has the Plague?* — *Hunc tu, Britanne, caveto!* — The Bulk of the People are naturally honest, and

and hate publick Knavery when they know it. And by publishing it, many are kept back from it; for, wicked as the Times are, and lost to Sense of Shame, it cannot but be with much inward Struggle that most Men arrive at ——— *Populus me sibilat, at mihi plaudo, &c.* ———

And when they know they must fall under the Indignation, and Contempt of Men of real Worth; and that dirty Dogs and Scoundrels (in Power or out of Power) can only approve of them, it must be still a stronger Restraint. Again, when Men of Figure decline from the Paths of publick Virtue and seem to flourish by it, even the Understandings of many would be corrupted into a Conceit they are wise, and to be imitated, if their Wickedness (*and it is Wickedness*) were not exposed to all who see or hear what they have done. This is necessary in such Times, that Virtue and Honour may not pass for old-fashion'd Things, and Chimæra's that Men of Parts and Figure have laid aside. ———

And it is Justice to honest Men, and to the Publick. Let me for once suppose that most hateful Supposition, *viz.* That reputed Patriots of Note and Figure should now, as in former Times they did, desert the Cause of their Country for the Wages of Iniquity: Some would presently cry ——— “ Aye! they are all Rogues alike. “ I told you they would drop off, when they could make “ their Bargain. The rest will follow. God pity our “ poor Country! ——— And for these Suspicions, there might be honest Well-wishers of the Publick Good, who would forbear to assist, or would but faintly assist, those who honestly act for it, and *dare* be poor or unemploy'd, and risque and suffer (even in private Life) all the Consequences of the Resentment and Malice of the Publick Oppressors, and their Numerous Underlings. — Others would cry, ——— “ Courage! they are weary of “ their damn'd Opposition. It will soon be contemptible, and the Minority dwindle to nothing, or to a “ few Fools of Virtue and Honour forsooth! But who “ will regard the poor Fellows? They are not able to “ cut a Figure. They will not *take* for themselves, “ and cannot *get* for their Friends, and soon will have “ no Friends. How can the chimerical Creatures imagine to have Votes in Counties or Burroughs? They “ have not Money enough, and cannot obtain Places “ and

“ and Favours; so that even their Promises will not  
 “ pass. We'll run them down in Town and Country.  
 “ Great Names desert them. The *Hiss*, and — *The*  
 “ *Question, The Question*, will knock them down in  
 “ the ——— Or if we let them prattle and talk Sense  
 “ and Truth, what will it signify *now*? The Bench of  
 “ J——ces is ours ——— *that* we have taken care of; ———  
 “ And all B——ches will be so. Don't you see the  
 “ Progress? If we can model two H——s of P——t,  
 “ shall we not model all the *W——r-H——lls* and  
 “ all the inferior C——ts in *Britain*? The Army is  
 “ ours, and the Treasury! The Treasury is ours! and  
 “ the Stocks, the Funds, the Companies! ——— But  
 “ damn that obstinate City of *London*, ——— and *Bristol*,  
 “ and ——— s'death, we'll drive them and *Trade* to  
 “ the Devil. We are in for Life, before *G——ge*! ———  
 “ And what tho' we insult ——— who may soon  
 “ come to command? ——— Pugh! So we did his  
 “ ——— And yet ——— And what has been  
 “ &c. ——— A third sort, disheartned by the Regrets  
 and despondent Fears of the first, and intimidated by the  
 Boasts of the other, would be like the Tribe of *Issachar*  
 ——— A strong Ass couching down between two Bur-  
 “ dens: And he saw that Rest was good, and the Land  
 “ that it was pleasant, and bowed his Shoulder to bear,  
 “ and became a Servant unto Tribute.

Dismal indeed would the State of *Britain* be, if in  
 such Defection, or such Appearances of it as created  
 Suspicion, there were not some honest resolute Men,  
 who would publicly shew, that the Fears of *the first*,  
 and the wicked Boasts and Hopes of *the other*, are  
 groundless and vain; and that *the third Sort* are mean  
 sordid Wretches.

But groundless and vain, one may say! Why, do you  
 think all the Minority, who have not yet gone off, are  
 impregnable? No truly! ——— Minority as they are, their  
 Number is too great, to admit of the Supposition. But  
 all the Minority, nor the Bulk of it, is not therefore  
 to be suspected. Shew me any Sett, whose Number  
 is between 2 and 300, who are all honest-hearted ———  
 You cannot! ——— Then there is nothing here, but what  
 always has been, and always will be in every Case.  
 Why then should Friends be discouraged, or Enemies  
 insult?

insult? Why should heartless, interested Creatures so soon take the Alarm, and couch under the Burden?  
*And they may find it a mistaken Measure.*

The Minority is indeed a Minority in certain Places, and on certain Occasions: But (as the late Duke of B———m said) I have seen an Event turn a Minority to a Majority, as round as a Hoop. And at present you know that *the Majority of the Kingdom is on the Side of the Minority in P———t.* All who do not get or expect, are openly on their Side. The *corrupted themselves* are not so lost to common Sense, but that, in their Judgments, they approve of the Minority (have you not heard them speak so?) tho' most shamefully they act otherwise. And why do they act so? Why, because they *get or strive to get.* Cromwell, by a Majority in Publick Business, run down a Minority in Affairs and the Majority of Britain. How did he do it?—By the Sword——— And Sir —— does it by the Purse. But tho' both continu'd long, the Last must come to an End as well as the First. Pray God it may, before an End be put to it by the greater publick Calamities he hurries us into so fast!

The brave and bold Spirit of *Free Britons* is not extinguish'd. We have down from all former Days, Lists of Min——rs, L——ds J——ges, G——ls, &c. Impeach'd, Fin'd, Forfeited, Hang'd, &c. And yet the publick Spirit had sometimes *then* run as low, as you may imagine it does *now.* The *English* have often suffer'd Oppression long, and with a Forebearance astonishing in a bold resolute People, honest and tenacious of their Rights and Liberties. But when roused at length, by continued Wrongs and Insults, the Rage of a Stormy Sea was not more irresistible than their just National Fury. The *Scots* have by some been thought too fiery and apt to strike a Blow —— terrible to the insolent rapacious Oppressors, even when supported by surrounding Crowds of *Scotch V——ns.* The History of that Part of *Britain* affords a signal, and almost *singular*, Instance of unconquerable Love and Resolution for the Rights and Liberties of one's Country. A private Gentleman, second Brother of a Family, very good and honourable indeed, (and it still continues) but neither of that which is call'd Great Quality nor

Fortune. When one of the most powerful Kings in *Europe* had quite over-run and subdu'd every Corner of this Gallant Man's Country; when the Nobility and Gentry and all Ranks had submitted to the Conqueror, and many of them were keener and more bitter than himself against all who might resist, he alone oppos'd the mighty Monarch and these false dastardly Men of his own Nation. With a very few private Friends whom he spirited up, so far from being numerous enough to be call'd an Army, that they were scarcely enough for the Train of an Envoy, he began and carry'd on a War to relieve his enthrall'd Native Land. And even his own King fought against him who fought to recover and vindicate his Crown and Kingdom. But not the Smalness of his Force, and the seeming Impossibility of Success, not the Meanness, the Perfidy and Malice of Multitudes of his Country-Men, and the Defection of the Great; not the Backwardness, Cowardise, Sordidness and Treachery of some pretended Friends, could discourage him *in the glorious Cause of Liberty and Patriotism*. Neither Want and Poverty, nor the extreamest Hardships, Difficulties and Dangers, nor Death presented to him in all its Shapes, deterr'd him from incessantly acting for his Country's Relief. He began and carry'd on its Relief, and dying for it, left it in such a Way, that his dear Country was reliev'd. I need not tell you, that this was the brave, the wise, the glorious *William Wallace*. His King, who had meanly fought against the Hero that fought for him, at length had his Eyes Open'd, and he undertook and successfully finish'd what *Wallace* had with such Honour carry'd so far.

*England* and *Scotland* were then disjoin'd in their Government and Interests. *But now they are One*. And the brave Spirit of both Nations (like the two Nations themselves) is united, and will ever be exerted for their Common Country, *Great Britain*, and never suffer the Rights and Liberties of it to be destroy'd or infring'd by the Artifices and Corruption of a M——r, no more than by the Sword of any other Enemy. It is not the Ancient savage Fierceness, but the old noble Resolution that animates them against the modern Corruption and Baseness.

But

But I would ask every one who has not renounc'd all just Pretence to Honour, supposing the worst he can suppose — that the Minority should dwindle, and the Great and most considerable desert their Country's Cause — What then? — It would be very lamentable. — But what more? — Nothing surely as to your Conduct, but that it should ardently move you to act more strenuously for your Country, as you are indispensibly bound to do. If their Apostacy disheartens you so much, you want Spirit; and if it prevails with you to follow them, you want Honesty. Are bad Examples to induce you to be as bad? For Shame, shake off this Meanness, and dare to be Good, tho' it were alone. Take what Assistance you can honourably get in a Cause so honourable. But if you do not find it, or if you lose any that you seem'd to have, — go on bravely. Your Duty requires you, and still more than formerly.

And don't apprehend that the Loss of any such Men would be so great. — The remaining Men of true Honour would be excited thereby *to unite in more vigorous Councils well executed*, and would soon shew, that they had only lost *gilded Cyphers*, but not *significant Figures*. And if the prevailing Course of Dishonour should come to obliterate *significant Figures*, yet do like an honest adventurous Merchant, when in his Trade he finds the Course of Exchange against him; by Resolution, Perseverance, and Skill, he brings back the Balance, and in a manner forces it to stand on his Side.

Worthy Persons may sometimes be Indolent Men; that languid powerless Disposition, which too often prevails over the strongest and justest Affections, and smothers them. All Ages witness it. And By-standers may mistake, and fancy them *Indolent* or *Faint*, when steadily pursuing the most proper Measures.

But the *Honest* and *Brave* do not, and never will turn faint by long Want of *the desired Success*. Nor have they been without glorious Success! Had it not been for them, what *Excise Schemes*, what frequent *Votes of Credit*, and consequently unfrequent Parliaments, and bye and bye Votes of Credit for Years together, and no more Parliaments? What giving up of National Possessions and Trade? What further despotick Arbitrariness, &c. would we not have felt? They have hinder'd the Estab-

blishment of these, and more of the curs'd Kind, which if the Nation was brought under, Publick Virtue and Honour would require us to redeem it from, at the Expence of our Fortunes and Blood; and the Brave Men who did it, would be celebrated and lov'd in all succeeding Ages. These and other glorious Victories they have had in a War that some call *Successful*. The War is not yet over. The Enemy keeps the Field and renews his Attacks and Stratagems. Is this a time to fall asleep or weary? Is this a time to sheath their Swords, or wield them faintly? No! The Genius of *Britain* cannot endure it! And let the Enemy know, that as long as one Dram remains of the *British Spirit* (*it cannot evaporate*) it will continually ferment till it has thrown him off like the Scum of a Wine-Press in Vintage. And whoever will take up his Ground and Measures, will find, that the Hand of *Britain* is irreconcilably — *Manus inimica Tyrannis*.

But, my dear Sir, the Freedom I resolv'd to follow in writing, you may perhaps think has led me too far from the Point I mainly propos'd, which was the great Corruption of the present Times, and greater than of former Days; for I have given you Instances in former Times alone, and only made Suppositions about the present. Thus you may think I have not advanced one bit in my propos'd Undertaking, but have render'd it harder for my self to go through with it. Were the former Times so abominable, and yet are ours worse? — yes, vastly worse. And I have not gone so far from my Purpose as might be imagin'd. The Crimes of every preceding Age are come down to ours, which with a plentiful Addition of our own, are wrought up to a higher Degree of more noxious and more inveterate Villainy. So a capacious Common Shore glutted up, and retaining all, has long received, and still receives the Nastiness of every Vault in the Street, which there does rot into a more pestiferous Excrement, that defiles the Air, and brings Diseases and Death on all the Inhabitants, who are not fortify'd against the suffocating, poisonous Exhalation.

To prove this by former and later Instances —

——— I must such Stories tell,  
As join'd to these, would to a Volume swell,  
As true as Heav'n, more infamous than Hell.

} But

But I will not deal so much in Particulars, and no farther than shall be needful to shew " what is the Nature and Kind, *what is the Characteristick* of the " Wickedness of the present Times." This must be done in another Letter, if I do it at all. And if I do, tho' it shall be wrote with equal Freedom, I intend to confine myself pretty closely to the Subject just now mentioned. And when I shall have done this, remember, my Worthy Dear Friend, that it will be a Debt on you, to Virtue, to your Country, and to our Friendship, to write " what is the Duty of honest Men, what is incumbent on them in their various Circumstances and " Situations, to do in these Times, and in this State of " Affairs." Let us try what we can produce on Subjects so important, and so little and seldom treated of, with an Application so usefully particular. Would to God we could set these Things in their native glaring Light, that all the World might see clearly, and R——ues be forc'd to own publickly, that they are hateful R——ues, or to turn Honest! and Honest Men be reliev'd from every Doubt, and in all Emergencies act honestly like themselves. Would to God we could fire every Breast with Noble, Just, and Unextinguishable Ardor for our long-injur'd Country, and prevent the Ruin it is relentlessly push'd on to!

May Great Britain have the cordial and unalterable Attachment of every profess'd Patriot, as certainly and firmly as *Philaretus* has of his own

London, April 8. 1738.

PROBUS.

P. S. Fatigu'd with writing, I went abroad the other Day to take the Air, and a Shower drove me into a Coffee House. As I waited for my Cup of Tea, I laid hold on a News-Paper lying on the Table, and the first Passage I happen'd to cast my Eyes on was, That —— had accepted of a Post in the Army! The very next Paragraph was, in large Letters, inscrib'd, *BANKRUPTS*. O *Gemini* how I started! But on reading the List, I saw they were only *Bankrupts in Estate*. If the Writers of the *Craftsman* and *Common Sense* saw this Paper and were struck as I was, who knows but henceforth they will present us weekly with a double List of *Bankrupts* — in Estate, and — in Ho——r!